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SUBJECT: TURKISH MEDIA REACTION
MONDAY, FEBRUARY 8, 2010

Media Highlights

US Embassy Ankara - Turkey Media Reaction - February 8, 2010 as prepared by the Public Affairs Information Office

How the US is Playing

Secretary Gates Visits Turkey: Turkish media gave extensive and prominent attention to Secretary's February 5-6 visit to Ankara for bilateral talks. All major papers, from mainstream to pro-government, highlighted his remarks at a press event with senior Turkish and travelling American press. Reports focused on the Secretary's remarks on the PKK, Iraq, Afghanistan, Iran and the Turkey-Armenia protocols but some media regurgitated the 2003 "hooding" incident of Turkish soldiers who had crossed into Iraq.

Missile Shield. Liberal Radikal headlined on Sunday "U.S. Knocks on Turkey's Door for Missile Shield" by reporting Secretary Gates proposed placing two radars in Turkey for the missile shield project against Iran. Media noted he refrained from specifics regarding naval plans for the Black Sea.

Regarding the PKK: Mainstream Milliyet, in "We Can Not Solve by Killing All of Them," wrote that Turkish Chief of General Staff Gen. Basbug emphasized "we cannot solve anything by killing all of them," while explaining to Secretary Gates Turkey's views on the fight against terrorism. Gates told reporters that he shared the views. The U.S. executive said that "while speaking with the leader of the regional administration in the north of Iraq, Massoud Barzani, I have stressed the importance of placing pressure on the PKK to end violence." Gates said they also discussed the missile shield that would be established by NATO, adding that "we have discussed the possibility of erecting two radars in Turkey." Conservative-pro government Turkiye says "Last Blow on PKK" emphasized the meeting between Secretary Gates and Minister Gonul and said they made important steps to put an end to the PKK's terrorist activities. Gates said the United States attached great importance to the move, sending the commander of U.S. forces in Iraq, General Ray Odierno, to Ankara to explore joint steps. Gates said they also put pressure on Barzani, the leader of the regional administration in north of Iraq, regarding terrorist organization PKK. Islamist-oriented Yeni Safak headlined "Predator Support Against PKK" and notes that

Secretary Gates promised to provide military equipment, including three Predator unmanned aerial vehicles, flight control systems, and advanced communication and data processing devices in order to support Turkey's fight against the PKK. Islamist-oriented Zaman headlined "Turkey's Multi-dimensional Foreign Policy is Positive," and reported that Secretary Gates said that "Turkey is situated on a crucial geography. As such, Turkey's efforts in all fields must be received positively."

Protocols: Mainstream Aksam in "On Gates Agenda: PKK, Iran and Missile Defense" highlights the Secretary's comments, practically verbatim, including his remarks on the Turkey-Armenia protocols and the possible impact a planned March Congressional hearing on the genocide issue will have on their passing. Aksam noted that Secretary Gates stressed "Turkey and Armenia have started down an important road. For us, anything that causes difficulty in this process is objectionable."

Odierno and Turkish Sensitivities: Hurriyet headlined "U.S. Secretary of Defense Gates Supports General Who Caused the 'Sack' Incident," emphasizing that "Secretary Gates expressed his full confidence in General Odierno," and also noted that Gates said "We give relations with Turkey the highest importance and to the Turkish people, and to Turkish soldiers, our greatest respect." CNNTurk said on 2/6 that Secretary Gates "brushed aside" questions about General Odierno, by saying "I was managing a university in Texas. I do not know the details of the incident." Several columnists on 2/8 questioned the US sincerity over Turkey's sensitivities. Columnist Fatih Cekirge in mainstream Hurriyet wonders why the US sent General Odierno to Ankara while "he still has a bad reputation for putting

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hoods on Turkish soldiers." The columnist says, "pictures of Turkish soldiers hooded with sacks cannot be erased from many people's minds. The person, who ordered that incident, including the interrogation of Turkish soldiers by Americans, was General Odierno and he was in Ankara recently. The US sent that General to Ankara in order to talk about disarming PKK and sharing intelligence in fight against PKK. It seems the US wanted to refresh our memories about that sad incident." In mainstream Vatan, columnist Necati Dogru claims a "joint effort" between the deep state elements of the US and Turkey "to defame Turkish military" before the eyes of people.

Afghanistan Reporting: Risky Patrols: Tabloid Aksam observed that Secretary Gates on 2/6 confirmed "I didn't ask for more troops," from Turkey, which plays an "impressive," "varied" role in Afghanistan with its 1700 troops, two provincial reconstruction teams, several operational mentoring and advising teams and command of regional command capital, Kabul. Turkish columnists on 2/8, however, had other views. Mainstream Hurriyet's Ferai Tinc in "Risky Patrol" opines that in an effort to pull forces out of the "Afghan quagmire," the international coalition is embarked on the "Afghanization" of the war by training and strengthening the Afghan army and security forces. She notes that ISAF is using Turkish troops as trainers to get the Afghanis ready, and quotes General McChrystal that "following a training period, we will send Afghan troops to the field," accompanied by coalition forces. Extreme Islamist Vakit observes in "You Can't Make History By Banking on Westerners," that the US and its supporters have "lost in Afghanistan after facing defeat in Iraq," and in a "last ditch effort" are increasing their soldiers but notes that "collaborators in Iraq, Pakistan and Afghanistan who place Western interests above those of their own people will soon be disappointed."

Turkish-Armenian Protocols/Genocide: Davutoglu Says "I Don't Believe This is a Coincidence" Mainstream Hurriyet reflects FM Davutoglu's uneasiness regarding the Armenian Genocide draft coming on the US Congress agenda on March 4. Davutoglu described the act as the "last loop" of the Armenians' strategy and said "Nobody can expect Turkey to believe that these developments are just a coincidence. We've been disturbed by the timing of the developments. Turkey will not bow to April 24 pressure. Bringing this draft on the Congress' agenda now will not serve the interests of the US, Turkey or Armenia. This initiative will damage the process and will bring it to the

bottle-neck situation. We expect the Washington Administration to be sensitive on this issue." In "Tough Mission" columnist Semih Idiz in mainstream Milliyet on 2/6 comments on the tough task ahead for Turkish Foreign Ministry Undersecretary Sinirlioglu who left for Switzerland and the US in order to convince both capitals on Turkey's points on protocols. Idiz warns "Sinirlioglu starts his mission with a very weak hand and it is surprising that Turkish MFA cannot see that weakness. Having a written assurance from the US and Switzerland against Armenian Court's interpretation remains highly unlikely. As Western diplomats emphasize if that happens then Armenia will ask for a written assurance about no linkage with Karabakh issue."

MFA Statement/Ambassador Jeffery: Sunday papers carried a statement by Turkish Foreign Ministry which calls for caution not to interfere in internal affairs. The MFA spokesman Ozugergin mentioned an interview with Ambassador Jeffery in a newspaper (Sabah) which "carried remarks commenting on Turkey's internal matters." Turkish opinion is divided. A nationalist columnist, Yigit Bulut, in mainstream HaberTurk thinks MFA did the very right thing because "Ambassador Jeffery was clearly interfering and he was making comments as if he was a colonial governor." Islamist and pro-government Zaman's sister publication, English-daily Today's Zaman, carried an op-ed by Ihsan Dagi, who labeled the MFA approach "old fashioned." He concludes: "The old motto of non-interference in domestic affairs is no longer practical. The line of demarcation between the domestic and the international has blurred in this age of globalization. What goes on inside a country

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may have direct consequences on another country. Boundaries do not bind; ideas, crimes, individuals, goods, etc., travel across national borders. The fate of one country is increasingly tied to the fate of others. For me the interview was enlightening in the sense that we heard what a senior American diplomat and old-time observer of Turkey thinks about politics, political actors and prospects in this country."

Entrepreneurs from the Middle East: Sunday's Adana-area Yeni Asir daily reported that the paper's entrepreneur Baybars Altuntas is one of five Turkish entrepreneurs who will participate in the upcoming White House Summit on Entrepreneurs in Washington. The paper quotes Altuntas as saying "Obama is the only President in the world history who takes action on this issue at the presidential level. That is why he is the world's most entrepreneurial leader."

In the Headlines

Bosnia Herzegovina-Serbia to Mutually Open Embassies (Sabah)
Mainstream Sabah and Hurriyet online report today that on 2/9, the foreign ministers of Bosnia-Herzegovina and Serbia will announce at a meeting in Ankara a decision for the normalization of bilateral ties. The two countries will mutually appoint ambassadors. The development is "historic" according to Sabah, which notes FM Davutoglu has been trying for five months for a settlement between the two countries. Hurriyet comments Ankara is concerned with NATO recently failing to extend an invitation to Bosnia-Herzegovina to join the Membership Action Plan as well as with the EU for lifting visa restrictions for Serbia, Macedonia and Montenegro but keeping Bosnia and Albania outside.

Gul: Parliament Missed the Opportunity for a New Constitution (Hurriyet)

Papers report President Gul, en route to New Delhi on Sunday, told reporters aboard his plane that the Turkish Parliament missed a key opportunity for drafting a new constitution. The parliament had reached a consensus about a new constitution, Gul said, and stressed that the failure to adopt a new constitution had been a "pity." "Everyone had their own draft constitution, and the parliament should have handled this in the very beginning. I don't know what they can accomplish now by changing the constitution piece by piece," said Gul. Gul also said Turkey's "National Security Policy Document," which enlists possible threats to the country's security, did not and could not stand above the laws. "This document has been considered as if it were above the constitution. This is totally wrong; the document is neither a law nor an article of the constitution," emphasized Gul.

Iran: Ahmedinejad Orders More Enriched Uranium
Mainstreams Hurriyet, Milliyet and Sabah report Ahmedinejad told a national TV audience that "Even though we had the capability of enriching uranium by 20%, we proposed exchange to the Western countries. We gave them 2-3 months period to reach an agreement. But they started a new game and I ordered for the uranium to be enriched for 20% to be used in the nuclear reactor." Sabah adds that SecDef Gates, during his Ankara meetings, emphasized that the time had come for the international community to pressure Iran to stop its nuclear program.

TV Spotlight (CNN Turk)

Israel is expected to deliver Heron drones to Turkey in the beginning of March.

Prime Minister Erdogan will receive Monday Osama al-Tikriti, the head of the Iraqi Islamic Party.

Opposition CHP leader Deniz Baykal said he expected early elections this year.

15 million elementary and secondary students will begin school

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Monday following the end of winter recess.

Tokyo will lend Turkey USD 1-1.5 billion at a relatively lower cost this year. Ankara has proclaimed 2010 as the "Japanese Year in Turkey."

Prime Minister Erdogan said Turkish embassies would be established in 27 of 52 African countries by the end of 2010.

A former Pakistan military official says former President General Pervez Musharraf could return to the country soon.

PM Netanyahu has attempted to end a war of words with Syria, saying Israeli was open to peace talks with Damascus.

The New York based Human Rights Watch (HRW) said Israel has failed to properly investigate war crime allegations against Palestinians in the Gaza Strip.

Britain is to tighten the rules on immigrants entering Britain on a student visa.

JEFFREY